BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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Issue: 00-15 5 Pages
April 14, 2000

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Migration

- **During the fourth quarter of 1999, BC gained 3,721 residents as a result of net migration from all sources.** The net inflow of population was more than four times that seen in the fourth quarter of 1998, when the province gained only 846 people from international and interprovincial migration.

  International migration increased the province's population by 4,368 in the fourth quarter of 1999 At the same time, there was a small net outflow from BC (-647) to the rest of Canada. This was largely due to a net loss of 1,426 people to Alberta, a province which has been drawing population from BC since the third quarter of 1996. In addition, Atlantic Canada attracted 369 more people from BC than it lost to this province in the fourth quarter of last year. However, Ontario was a net donor (+545) of interprovincial migrants to British Columbia. The province also gained population from all other regions of Canada.

  Source: BC STATS

- **BC's population is expected to increase by 36,800 due to migration from other provinces and countries during 2000, as net migration to BC from other provinces continues to pick up speed.** Net migration from all sources totalled 20,400 last year, but was just 7,400 in 1998.

  The increase in migration is expected to come from a turnaround in the interprovincial movement of people, as more people come to BC from other parts of the country. After two years of outflows, interprovincial migration is expected to increase BC's population by 7,700 this year. At the same time, BC is expected to receive nearly a fifth of all international immigrants coming to Canada in 2000. Net immigration to the province is expected to reach 29,100 this year. BC's share of total immigration to Canada is forecast to be 18%. It had peaked at 23% in 1996, but has been declining since then. *Source: BC STATS*

The Economy

- **There were 775 consumer bankruptcies in the province in February, 19.8% more than in the same month last year.** This continued a general upward trend in the number of individuals filing for bankruptcy in the province. February was the seventh straight month in which the number of consumer bankruptcies in BC grew at double-digit rates. Nationally, there were 6,535 bankruptcies registered in February, 7.3% more than in the same month of 1999. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **While consumer bankruptcies continue to rise, the number of business failures in the province has been falling.** In February, there were 72 business bankruptcies registered in BC, down from 96 in the same month of 1999. Relative to a year earlier, the number of business bankruptcies in the province has fallen in all but two months since last May. February's decline (-25.0%) marked the third time in as many months that bankruptcies were down by at least a fifth. At the national level, the number of business bankruptcies increased for the first time in nearly a year, rising 3.5% to 896. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **New motor vehicle sales in BC and the territories fell 2.8% (seasonally adjusted) between January and February.** The drop in sales was part of a nationwide trend that saw the number of new vehicles driven off dealers' lots decline in every province except Manitoba (+0.9%). Sales were down sharply in Newfoundland (-11.2%) and Quebec (-10.6%). Nationally, new vehicle sales fell 4.4% between January and February.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Report **Income characteristics of recent immigrants**

Did you know...
There were just under 6 million cell phone subscribers in Canada at the end of 1998. That means that one in five Canadians were cell phone users–more than twice as many as in 1995.

- **The help wanted index, which measures the number of help-wanted ads in BC newspapers, rose again in March.** BC's index has been trending up since the beginning of last year. Nationally, a four-year-long climb in the index also continued last month.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Housing

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued its long downward slide in February.** In Victoria, the New Housing Price Index (NHPI) was down 5.3% from February 1999. However, there are signs that Vancouver's new housing market may be starting to turn around, as the NHPI for that city posted its smallest year-over-year decline (-0.9%) since 1994. New housing in Victoria is currently selling for about three-quarters (72.6%) as much as in 1992. In Vancouver, the cost of new housing stands at 83.8% of the 1992 level.

  Nationally, the NHPI was up 2.1% in February as new house prices rose in all but three metropolitan regions. Sudbury/Thunder Bay (-1.3%) was the only place outside BC where new house prices fell. Relative to February 1999, the largest price increases were in St. Catherines-Niagara (+5.5%) and Ottawa-Hull (+5.0%).

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Housing starts in the province remained volatile in March, falling to 24.4% (seasonally adjusted) below February's level.** Starts had soared in February (+48.7%), but were weak at the beginning of the year, dropping 38.3% in January, as a year-long up-and-down pattern of wide swings in the number of starts was maintained. Canadian starts edged down 1.1% in March as the number of new housing construction projects in both Ontario (-1.9%) and Quebec (+0.0%) levelled off after surging ahead in February. In contrast, all three prairie provinces saw housing starts rise in March, offsetting the effect of declines in the previous month. Starts in Manitoba were up 44.4%, with smaller increases occurring in Saskatchewan (+22.7%) and Alberta (+8.7%). On the east coast of the country, starts were up 3.7% overall, despite a 34.6% drop in Newfoundland.

  Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

Social Security

- **Canadian governments spent $6,658 per capita on social programs in 1996/97.** Social security programs took the biggest bite ($3,160) out of the pie, while health care ($1,791) and education ($1,708) received roughly equal shares of social program spending. Half of all government spending in Canada is used to fund social programs. *Source: Social Security Statistics, HRDC*

Dining Out

- **Just over a third (34.6%) of the food budget of Canadians in 1998 was spent on meals outside the home.** Canadians spent a total of $77.6 billion on food in 1998, $26.9 billion of that on meals outside the home. Spending on restaurant food rose 42.2% between 1989 and 1998, outpacing the 30.3% increase in expenditures on food and non-alcoholic beverages purchased at supermarkets, grocery stores, and other food stores during the same period.

  Not surprisingly, people living in large households were less likely to dine out than those living in smaller households. About a fifth (19.6%) of all Canadians lived in households with five or more people in 1996, but they accounted for just 11.9% of consumer spending at restaurants. People living alone made up 9.2% of the population, but forked over 16.3% of total restaurant expenditures in that year. Husband-wife households with no children also accounted for a larger share (24.7%) of the restaurant market than of the population (19.1%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC made up 12.9% of Canada's population in 1996, but residents of the province were responsible for a much larger share (16.9%) of total spending in restaurants, suggesting that dining out is a more common practice here than in the rest of the country.** In Quebec and Alberta, the share of total restaurant spending also exceeded the population share, but not by as much as in BC. *Source: Statistics Canada*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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Infoline Report:

Income Characteristics of Recent Immigrants (IMDB Series)

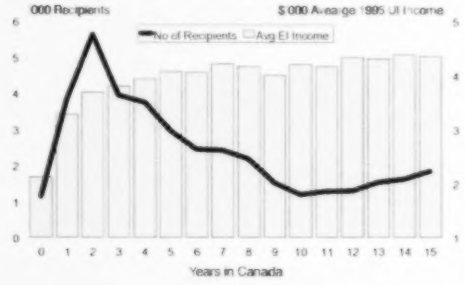
Contact: Frank Ip / (250) 387-0336

Originally published in Fourth Quarter 1999 issue, *Immigration Highlights*. Annual subscription: $30 + GST

Immigrants who have been in Canada for about 2 years are most likely to receive employment insurance (EI) income. However, as the length of stay increases, they are less likely to be EI recipients.

Approximately 17 per cent of the B.C. immigrant population who came to Canada between 1980 and 1995 received EI income in the 1995 tax year. The proportion is similar to the national average of 16 per cent. Average EI income in 1995 for B.C. immigrants in this group ranged from $2,105 to $4,367 depending on the year of landing. It appears that immigrants who have been in Canada for about 2 years have the highest likelihood of receiving EI benefits. The longer the immigrants are in the country, the less likely they are to receive EI income. This may result from the fact that immigrants who have been in Canada for less than two years may have remained unemployed and hence not eligible for EI benefits.

1995 Average EI Income of B.C. Immigrants
By Years in Canada



Immigrants who have been in Canada longer tended to receive a higher average EI income. Average 1995 EI incomes for B.C. immigrants ranged from a low of $2,105 for those who landed in the 1995 to a high of $4,367 for those who landed in 1981. Again, this likely relates to the length of employment of immigrants in Canada. As presented in previous studies, immigrants who have been in Canada longer tended to receive higher employment incomes and hence have higher EI income eligibility.

New Data Makes Studies of Mobility and Performance after Landing Possible

New studies are made possible by using data available from the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) developed jointly by Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This database is created by combining income tax records from Revenue Canada and immigration records for a sample of immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1980 and 1995. By comparing an immigrant's province of initial landing and the province of residence as indicated on the same immigrant's tax return, interprovincial mobility of this immigrant can be determined. Also, indicators can be developed to examine certain characteristics of immigrants, such as their earnings, for a period after they arrived in Canada.

The sample in the database is large enough to be representative for the general immigrant population who landed between 1980 and 1995. For example, the actual number of immigrants aged 15 and older who landed in B.C. between 1980 and 1995 was about 347,789 persons. The sample contained within the IMDB was 194,565 immigrants, about 56% of the actual total landings. This is the fourth feature article utilizing the IMDB.

Almost one in every four immigrants who resided in B.C. in 1995 has moved from another province. That is, they did not originally land in B.C. Most of these movers were from Ontario and Alberta. Those who moved from Alberta or originally landed in B.C. (17 per cent) were relatively more likely to receive EI benefits than those who moved from Ontario or other provinces (15 per cent).

Immigrants who came under the Family and Refugee/Designated classes tended to be the most likely to have received EI income in 1995. On the other hand, those under the Business/Skilled Workers classes were the least likely to receive EI benefits. This is primarily due to the fact that immigrants in the Family and Refugee classes were not admitted based on

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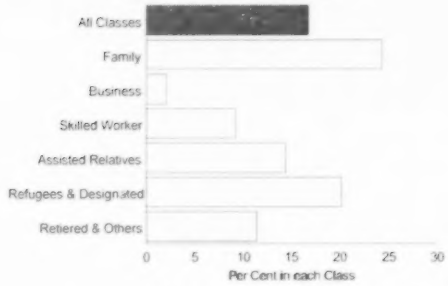
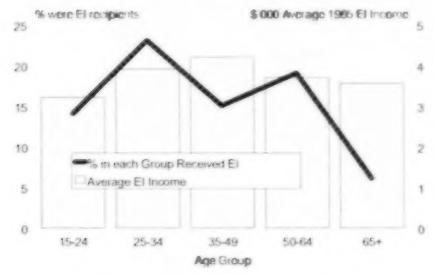
their skills, work experience, or educational qualification. On the other hand, Business immigrants are more likely to be self-employed or business owners and hence less likely to receive employment incomes or EI benefits.

1995 EI Income of B.C. Immigrants
Landed 1980-1995 By Class



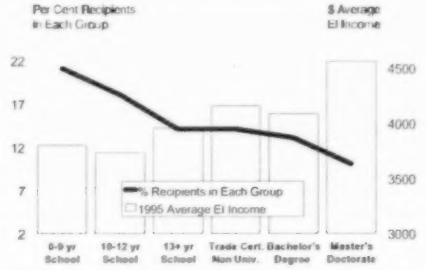
Female immigrants were slightly more likely to be EI recipients than their male counterparts. On the other hand, male EI recipients received a higher average EI income than female recipients in 1995. Regardless of gender, more EI recipients were in the 25-34 and 50-64 age groups. However, immigrants in the age group of 35-49 received a relatively higher average EI income than those in other age groups.

1995 EI Income of BC Immigrants
Landed 1980-1995 By Age Group



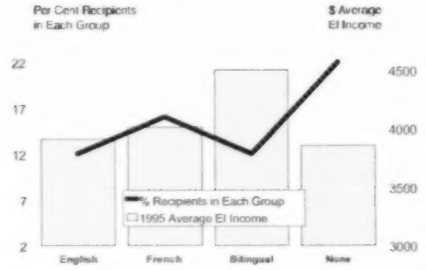
Immigrants having a higher educational qualification at time of landing were less likely to receive EI benefits. Also, immigrant recipients of EI tended to receive a relatively higher average EI income in 1995 if they possessed higher educational qualification at the time of landing. It is also interesting to note that EI recipients with a trade certificate or non-university training diploma tended to receive a slightly higher average EI income than those who had a bachelor's degree.

1995 EI Income of BC Immigrants
Landed 1980-1995 By Education at Landing



Immigrants who possessed some official language ability at the time of landing were less likely to receive EI benefits, and if they did, they tended to receive a higher average EI income than those who had no official language ability. Relative to other EI receiving immigrants, bilingual immigrants received a considerably higher average EI income in 1995.

1995 EI Income of BC Immigrants
Landed 1980-1995 By Official Language Ability



Variations in the likelihood of receiving EI benefits also existed between immigrants from different sources. For immigrants who arrived between 1980 and 1995, those from South Asia were the most likely to receive EI benefits whereas those from Western Europe were the least likely to have EI income during the 1995 tax year.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jan 1/00	% change on one year ago
BC	4,043.7	0.9
Canada	30,606.7	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1998	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	110,948	-0.2
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	99,708	0.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,908	-0.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	15,969	-1.6
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jan	3,359	15.1
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jan	2,316	6.7
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jan	2,909	4.6
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Feb '00	% change on one year ago
BC	111.4	1.2
Canada	112.0	2.7
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Mar '00	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,094	0.6
Employed - BC	1,947	2.4
Unemployed - BC	147	-18.1
		Mar '99
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.0	8.6
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.8	7.9
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Apr 12/00	Apr 14/99
Prime Business Rate	7.00	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.70	6.20
- 5 year	8.35	6.70
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Apr 12/00	Apr 14/99
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4622	1.4929
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6834	0.6695
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Feb '00	% change on one year ago
BC	626.02	0.3
Canada	604.88	3.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

Released this week by BC STATS

- Migration Highlights, Fourth Quarter 1999
- Labour Force Statistics, March 2000
- Major Projects Inventory, First Quarter 2000

Next week

- Consumer Price Index, March 2000

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